

Understanding equality and human rights in relation to religion or belief

HRSJ has been awarded a research contract by the Equality and Human Rights Commission on 'understanding equality and human rights in relation to religion or belief'.

The research will explore key conflicting interests relating to religion or belief. Such disputes might arise between the different equality 'strands' that enjoy legal protection (for example, religion or belief and sexual orientation or gender) and between different human rights (for example, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and the right to freedom of expression).

The aim of the research is to identify the concerns of different groups in England and Wales that have a direct stake in these issues: religion or belief groups; employers (or employer organisations); public service providers, and groups representing different equality strands. The project will also identify key principles that might underpin the resolution of disputes in the workplace or the wider public sphere.

Key issues will include religious symbols, religious conscience, religious clothing and freedom of expression and potential (or perceived) clashes between the rights of religious and non-religious groups, and between religion or belief and other equality groups.

The research will conclude in October 2011.

Methodology

- A literature review covering relevant case law and British and international research
- At least 60 interviews with the key groups identified above
- An online survey
- Two or three round table discussion events

The research team comprises: Professor Philip Leach, Alice Donald, Karen Bennett and Aruna Dudhia.

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